

Commission on Disability Meeting  
Minutes for March 15th, 2016, 4:30PM  
Worcester City Hall, Levi Lincoln Chamber 3<sup>rd</sup> Flr.

**Attendance:**

**Members Present:** Herbert Cremer, Francesca Abbey (Remote – Phone), Robert Bilotta, Robert Bureau, Nancy Garr- Colzie, Elizabeth Myska, Joseph Prochilo (Remote – Skype), Douglas Russell, Jr., Stephen Stolberg

**Members Absent:** Paul Keister

**Staff:** Jayna Turchek, Dawn E. Clark

**Guests:** Elvira Guardiola, Parking Administrator; David Rushford, City Clerk; Dr. Matilde Castiel, Commissioner of Health and Human Services; Robert Antonelli, Assistant Commissioner of Parks

**Members of the Public:** Rachel Brown, Sue Philip, Scott Ricker,

**Welcome, Call to Order & Introductions**

Vice Chairperson Nancy Garr-Colzie welcomed commission members and the members of the public present. Commissioner Susan Swanson has resigned due to work commitments. Joseph Prochilo elevated to full member for this meeting.

**Approval of January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 Minutes**

Commissioner Myska moved to approve the minutes as written. Commissioner Stolberg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**Report back from MOD Regional Disability Commission Meeting (March 9<sup>th</sup>, City Hall)**

Chairperson Garr-Colzie reported the Massachusetts Office on Disability new Director David D'Arcangelo was the featured speaker accompanied by staff member Jeffrey Dougan. The MOD office is located at 1 Ashburton Place in Boston and has these regional meetings as a way to be accessible to the Commissions.

Discussion items included:

1. Fines for HP and ramp violations generated in city and towns;
2. Difference between official Commissions on Disabilities versus Committees;
3. Updates to the AAB codes to include ADA guidance that may not be addressed in CMR 521 (Mass. Building Code);
4. Emergency preparedness; and
5. Networking with other Commissions was also highlighted as important and helpful.

**Update on Handicap Parking violations in the City (review of citations from 2015) (Elvira Guardiola, Parking Administrator)**

Director Turchek introduced Elvira Guardiola, Worcester's Parking Administrator. She referred the Commission the pages in their packet relating to the HP (Code 302) and ramp violations (Code 301) for calendar year 2015. This item was brought forth by request to know where the violations were taking place and want those violations were.

Commissioner Cremer asked to put on the Commission's agenda to consider recommending to the City Manager that the fine be increased from \$200 to \$500. A second request for the Commission to consider is to establish a fund from these fines for the Commission to administer. He would also like to see Worcester do a "sting" where police are dedicated for a particular time period and place to ticket HP placard fraud.

Ms. Gardiola reminded the Commission the City Council would need to increase violation fines and may well be the body to determine the establishment of a fund using fines or whether the funds from fines would go into the general fund as they do now. She agreed that there is misuse of HP spaces as well as the misuse of placards. She indicated that municipalities that have done stings often received grants for this purpose. Framingham recently received such a grant.

With the current database the City cannot print out a separate report for all of the dismissed fines. This would have to be done by hand which is labor intensive. There are only two staff in the Parking Administration Office. The Commission suggested there may be ways to collect this information. She agreed to consider this request when the current database contract is renegotiated.

Ms. Guardiola indicated that a high percentage of the violations were related to people with disabilities who forgot to make their placard visible.

Several comments from the public supported the establishment of a fund for the Commission to use for accessibility.

### **Discussion on Red Cab services (Robert Bilotta)**

Commissioner Bilotta made the Commission aware of some issues related to the service being provided by the two wheelchair accessible taxis operated by Red Cab including no late night service and cold weather issues. He asked when and how the Commission wanted to address these issues. The Chairperson indicated that there were “Standards for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis” developed by the Commission and received by the City Council in April 2005. These will be distributed to the Commission for the next meeting when Red Cab owner Toni Donovan is expected to attend. We need work together so we can assist Red Cab to give better service.

Director Turcek suggested there may be a way to collect data related to concerns that may help Red Cab. Also recommends the Commission be

aware of what the ADA responsibilities of taxis cabs are. Please forward questions for Red Cab to staff so we can have a productive visit next month.

Ms. Turchek also shared that Commissioner Myska spoke to her about transportation for people with disabilities in general. There are discussions occurring in Boston between agencies representing people with disabilities and Uber. It would be helpful if the Commission could have a connection with this group, perhaps by bringing some ideas/best practices back to make a difference in Worcester' accessible transportation availability. Commissioner Myska was requested to liaison with the Boston group and report back to the Commission.

### **Introduction of the new Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Dr. Matilde Castiel**

Director Turchek introduced Dr. Mattie Castiel. City Manager Edward M. Augustus Jr. appointed Dr. Matilde "Mattie" Castiel as the City's new Commissioner of Health and Human Services on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

As Director of the reconstituted City's Department of Health and Human Services, which was eliminated as part of budget cuts in 2009 during the national economic crash, she is responsible for the City's divisions of Public Health, Youth Services, Human Rights and Disabilities, Veterans Affairs and Elder Affairs.

Dr. Castiel brings a wealth of professional knowledge and more than three decades of experience to the role. In addition to strong community-based leadership in the fight against drug addiction and homelessness, she is board-certified in internal medicine, and has been the Medical Director to a large municipal EMS system, an ER attending physician, primary care physician, urgent care physician and physician to an elderly outreach program.

Dr. Castiel was most recently the founder, Executive Director and Medical Director of Latin American Health Alliance, a collaboration of diverse community groups dedicated to combating homelessness and

drug addiction. She is also the founder of the Hector Reyes House and Casa Reyes, a substance abuse treatment facility and transitional house for Hispanic males in Worcester. Last year, Dr. Castiel opened Café Reyes, an innovative jobs training program in which residents at Hector Reyes House and Casa Reyes run a Shrewsbury Street restaurant.

A Cuban immigrant who speaks fluent Spanish, Dr. Castiel has an MD from the University of California-San Francisco and a BS in Cellular and Molecular Biology from Cal State-Northridge. She previously worked as a physician at UMass Memorial Medical Center, Family Health Center of Worcester, and St. Louis Regional Medical Center.

The Commission welcomed Dr. Castiel and thanked her for her time with them.

### **Conversation on Early Voting (City Clerk David Rushford)**

City Clerk Rushford provided the following details known to date concerning Early Voting and efforts being made to explore the opportunities that may be available through its implementation to both the members of the disabled and frail elder communities.

Early Voting is required to be implemented across the Commonwealth for the first time during the run-up to this year's November 8<sup>th</sup> Presidential Election. Ten days of voting; Monday, October 24 through Friday, October 29 and Monday, October 31 through Friday, November 4 are required minimally.

Funding for cities and towns has not been realized at this date. However, Worcester's Board of Election Commissioners, the City Manager and the City Clerk are eager to implement a geographically broad program during both of the two weeks and the weekend in between those two weeks. Funding for this twelve-day plan is approximately \$75,000.00.

Detailed guidelines and/or requirements for implementing this program is not yet available. Meanwhile, he shared with the Commission an outline for early voting in Worcester which has preliminary approval from both the Election Commission and City Manager. This plan has locations and hours for voting that are used for illustrative purposes and to give us a view of what a comprehensive program might look like.

These are a few points for our consideration:

- How does EV empower individuals and communities?
- How can your Commission empower people to participate?
- How do we make EV such a success that it becomes a permanent manner of voting?

The Chairperson thanked Mr. Rushford for his presentation and looked forward to further information on the early voting process.

**Parks Division Update and Review of Master Plans and Construction Improvements (Assistant Commissioner of Parks Robert Antonelli)**

**Betty Price - Master Plan**

This is a playground boarded by Eastern Avenue and Laurel Street and less than a half an acre. The Master Plan includes a new playground with poured in place surfacing; a gazebo with a performance area in middle and adult fitness equipment; trees and a flattened walkway for children to learn to use bicycles, tricycles, etc. The neighborhood is on a hill and this facility is in the middle of the hill. On the back side of the area plans include an access road for equipment to enter.

**Holmes Field - Master Plan**

Holmes Field is boarded by Plantation Street, March Street and Orient Street. The new plan includes two tennis courts; new playground (replace the old playground with poured in place safety surfacing)

identifying the 10 -12 and 2-5 age ranges; accessible path from March Street to Plantation Street and vis-visa passing by the tennis courts and playground: sidewalks would be used for a loop and would be marked for distance; rehab the roller rink(fresh lines etc.) and install a rectangular field for multiple use; lighting would be installed so walkway would be lit in the evening into the late fall season for walking and children learning to ride their bikes.

### **Oread Castle – Master Plan**

Former location of one the first women’s colleges located in the Main South area bordered by Eli, Oread and King Streets. Renovations will include two basketball courts (standard MBA court) (2<sup>nd</sup> court can be used to play soccer etc.; rectangular multi - purpose court; a new poured in place safety surface playground; all walkways to be accessible and marked for distance; HP parking to be on the upper right corner. The topography of the land is challenging for accessibility. The proposal is to have the upper level accessible with an entrance on Eli Street.

### **Coes Knife – Construction Improvement**

This will be the location of the future Stearns Tavern and multi-generational playground. The walkways are all accessible. The theme being used is “Seven Hills” so there are seven little humps that will access playground features allowing access onto the play equipment. There will be HP spaces in the parking lot and there is still discussion about additional HP spaces. If there are additional HP spaces there will be additional curb cuts. The Parks Department is not involved with the Stearns Tavern side of the plans but keeps in touch with City Manager’s Office about any developments with that plan.

### **Crompton Park - Construction Improvement**

Currently under construction and expected to be finished in June 2016. Improvements include two new tennis courts; a handball court; a new parking area; a new access into the community building; removal of the existing parking area and walkways going into the community building by doing this the vehicular and pedestrian traffic can be separated

confining the vehicular traffic to the back side of the pool and grassing in the front side for pedestrian use. The existing baseball field will be removed and the existing softball fields will be renovated with more space and access in the future. As this part of the work there will be lights installed in the parking lot and tennis courts. The remaining lights will be installed as areas are improved.

#### **Elm Park, Phase 4 - Construction Improvement**

The Myra Hiatt Kraft Bridge has been completed. Next phase will finish the walkways in the southern pond area along Park, Elm and Russell Streets. This phase is expected to be completed June 2016.

#### **Hope Cemetary Water System - Construction Improvement**

Working with the City Manager the hope is to install new spigots for watering. Phase I has been completed by Curtis Avenue by replacing between 30 to 35 spigots. 4 accessible spigots have been installed and spread throughout this section. Some of the topography particular near the street and hilly area is difficult to work with. Future plans include lateral feeders so more spigots can be installed.

#### **Indian Hill Park – Master Plan**

This Park is on Ararat Street. Construction is in process: building parking lot with HP spaces, basketball court and the accessible walkways toward the field spaces and is expected to be completed by mid-summer. The baseball fields will be a future project. The accessible route along the edge would be distance marked as in other parks.

#### **Park, Institute Park - Construction Improvement**

The restroom building was completed and useable last year with renovations including a new roof. A gazebo was installed to replace an old stone tower that was knocked down in the 1950's build by Stephan Salisbury at the end West Street. Accessible routes are to be constructed down to the gazebo. The area is flat and there will not be a step into the gazebo. This is a smaller venue concerts, etc. can be held overlooking Salisbury Pond. Currently working to find ways to develop walkways to

get people from the half shell and viewing area up to Salisbury Street, There will be a walkway along the pond as well.

### **Worcester Common - Construction Improvement**

The City has worked with AAB for handrails at both front and back of City Hall. Changes have been made to the WWII Memorial. The fountain and the two large markers bearing the names of those that died during WWII will remain. The old plaque that was by the reflecting pool has been moved over to this area. An accessible route into the marker is provided so the names could be touched. The memorial is currently under construction and is slated to be completed late May early June.

### **Review of AAB notices and applications: City properties in bold**

#### Application for Variance

- 332 Main Street, Docket # V16 059 with Supplement

#### Notice of Hearing

- **2 Washington Square, Docket # C14 073**
- 50 Water Street, Docket #V16 001

#### Correspondence

- 271 Franklin Street, Docket # C14 037
- 65 Milton Street, Docket # C15 078
- 51 Myrtle Street, Docket # C15 082

#### Decision

- 50 Water Street, Docket #V16 001
- **455 Main Street, Docket #C14 008**
- 102 Russell Street, Docket #C14-069

### **Announcements:**

- **WRTA Transportation Planning Advisory Meeting**  
March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 1-2:30pm, WRTA Building, 287 Grove St.
- **Architectural Reading Training:** Worcester City Hall, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, 3-5PM (Open to the public-RSVP needed)
- **REDD (Rights, Equality and Dignity for the Disabled)**

April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 4:00 – 5:30PM, YWCA, Members Lounge

- **Audio Journal, Accent on Ability Radio Program:** April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 5-6pm, <http://www.audiojournal.net/>
- **Next Commission on Disability meeting:** April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 4:30pm.
- **Reporting Disabled and Elder Abuse Training:** Worcester Sr Center, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 1-3PM (Open to the public- RSVP)

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:45pm.